

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1928

As Reported By House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to regional transportation planning.

Brief Description: Providing for more comprehensive regional transportation planning.

Sponsors: Representatives R. Fisher, Quall, Locke, Roland and Johanson.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Transportation, March 2, 1993, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 25 members: Representatives R. Fisher, Chair; Jones, Vice Chair; Schmidt, Ranking Minority Member; Mielke, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Brough; Brumsickle; Cothorn; Eide; Finkbeiner; Forner; Hansen; Heavey; Horn; Johanson; J. Kohl; R. Meyers; Miller; H. Myers; Orr; Patterson; Quall; Sheldon; Shin; Wood; and Zellinsky.

Staff: Gene Baxstrom (786-7303).

Background: The 1990 Growth Management Act authorized the creation of regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) through the voluntary association of local governments.

An RTPO must include, at minimum, at least one county; at least 100,000 in population or include three counties; and have as members all counties within the region and 60 percent of the cities within the region, representing at least 75 percent of the city population.

The objective of RTPOs is to enhance transportation planning both within a county and among counties. Specifically, RTPO duties are: a) to develop, adopt and keep current a regional transportation plan that is consistent with county and city comprehensive plans; and b) to certify that the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans conform

with statutory requirements and are consistent with regional plans.

Regional transportation plans must address facilities and services which cross county lines, or which impact or are impacted by activities in other counties. Each RTPO must create a policy board consisting of representatives of major employers, member cities and counties, transit agencies, port districts and the Department of Transportation to assist in policy development.

To date 14 RTPOs have been formed, including 38 of the state's 39 counties. State financial and technical support is provided to assist with the effort of carrying out RTPO duties.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The duties of regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) are expanded to require: a) preparation and adoption of a regional transportation strategy for the region, including addressing alternative transportation modes in regional corridors; and b) in cooperation with affected jurisdictions, development of a six-year regional transportation improvement program which proposes regionally significant transportation projects and programs, including priorities and financing plans. RTPOs must also certify that the transportation elements of local comprehensive plans and, where appropriate, the countywide planning policies adopted under the Growth Management Act and the regional transportation plan are consistent with each other.

RTPOs must develop guidelines and principles that provide specific direction for the development and evaluation of the transportation elements of comprehensive plans and to assure that state, regional and local goals are met. These guidelines are to be developed in cooperation with cities, towns and counties. Local comprehensive plans must reflect these guidelines.

More specificity is added to the elements of regional transportation plans concerning the facilities and transportation programs which must be addressed in such a plan. New plan elements are added, including: a) a financial component addressing existing and prospective resources; b) assessment of development patterns and their impact on transportation; c) a regional transportation approach; and d) where appropriate the relationship among transit providers, including high capacity transit services.

The six-year street programs developed by cities and the six-year road program developed by counties are to address transportation. Each program is required to specifically

set forth those projects and programs of regional significance which are to be included in the regional transportation improvement program. Similarly, the six-year transit financial plans must incorporate a development program for transit and specifically set forth those projects of regional significance to be included in transportation improvement programs within the region. The six-year plan shall also address how the local government will act to preserve railroad right of way if railroad operations cease.

Sections of statute are recodified.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The requirement that the regional transportation strategy also address a regional growth strategy is eliminated. The transportation elements of local comprehensive plans and countywide planning policies, and regional transportation plans must be consistent with each other, rather than local plans and policies having to be consistent with the regional transportation plan.

Railroad corridors are cited to be considered in transportation planning. The six-year transportation plans of cities and counties must address use of railroad corridors where rail operations cease. Numerous technical changes are made.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect on July 1, 1993.

Testimony For: The role of RTPOs is better defined in relationship to local comprehensive planning and the planning efforts of various parties are better coordinated. More guidance for objectives of RTPOs is provided.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Charles Howard, Department of Transportation; Dan Snow, Washington State Transit Association; Joe Ganem, Bicycle Federation of Washington and Rails to Trails Conservancy; and Judy Frolich, Washington State Association of Counties.